

Premium Matters – Primary

SPENDING THE PRIMARY PE AND SCHOOL SPORT PREMIUM

FIVE YEARS ON: A BIRMINGHAM CASE STUDY

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Introduction

Launched in September 2013, and available to all qualifying primary schools in England, the Primary PE and Sport Premium soon became a funding stream incomparable to any other primary curriculum subject (Parnell et al., 2017). It achieved credibility and status by being ‘ring-fenced’ for the sole purpose of improving physical education (PE) and school sport provision in primary schools and by its accountability to Ofsted. To date, spending of the Premium has been at the discretion of the school leadership team or delegated to the primary PE subject coordinator (Griggs, 2018; 2016). This has meant that schools are free to make locally based decisions about how to spend the funding, based on the needs of their children (DfE, 2010).

Five years on from the introduction of the Primary PE and Sport Premium, and with a doubling of the funding announced in 2017 (DfE and ESFA, 2017), little research examining what the funding has been spent on has been published, although the county sports partnerships do review schools’ usage of the Premium as part of their regular reporting to Sport England. Their initial findings were included in a Department for Education (DfE) report (2015).

This article provides a snapshot of practice by sharing how 25 schools in Birmingham have spent the Premium so far. Our aim was to gain insight into how the funding has been used and the priorities schools are making regarding the five key indicators against which schools in receipt of the Premium are expected to see an improvement (DfE and ESFA, 2017). These indicators are:

1. the engagement of all pupils in regular physical activity – kick-starting healthy active lifestyles
2. the profile of PE and sport being raised across the school as a tool for whole school improvement
3. increased confidence, knowledge and skills of all staff in teaching PE and sport
4. broader experience of a range of sports and activities offered to all pupils
5. increased participation in competitive sport.

Methodology

Data for this research were collected from a sample of 25 from 257 (10 per cent) primary schools in Birmingham during the academic year of 2017-2018. The sample was randomly selected. Each school had completed an online report that was freely accessible and downloadable from the school’s website: a statutory requirement for all schools eligible for the Premium (DfE and ESFA, 2017). The 25 schools in this study have been kept anonymous. Expenditure reports were read in detail and the content organised against the following areas:

- financial expenditure

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- use of the reporting template developed by the Association for Physical Education (afPE) and the Youth Sport Trust (YST)
- school swimming.

A further analysis of expenditure was undertaken for each of the 25 schools and broken down across the five key indicators. Under each key indicator, further sub-themes were generated. This provided greater awareness of where schools had been directing their spending. The analysis of the data has been informed by Grounded Theory (Ary et al., 2014), where inductive open coding (Basis, 2010) has enabled a process of deciphering the expenditure on each school's Premium report and the allocation of content to specific areas within each of the five key indicators.

Results

Use of the reporting template

Across the 25 primary schools sampled, a total of nine (36 per cent) used the official reporting template commissioned by the DfE (2017) and supported by afPE (2017) and YST (2017). A lack of consistency in schools' reporting processes presented challenges when collating the data, as evidence was in varying forms and not always available against the five key indicators (see Figure 1).

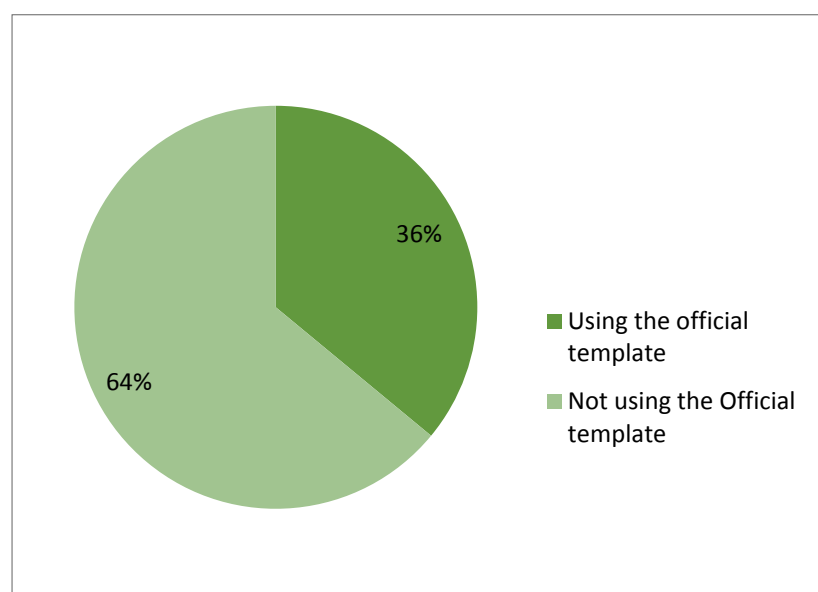


Figure 1: The number of schools in the study using the afPE/YST reporting template

Key indicator breakdown

Tables 1-5 present the findings across each key indicator. Each table has been arranged by areas of spend within each key indicator, the percentage of that occurrence, the total amount of expenditure for that area, and the overall percentage of spending against the sample's total expenditure (£373,940.13). Areas of spend in tables 1-5 have been ordered by the per cent occurrence in the first instance and then by the total amount of money spent.

Key indicator one: the engagement of all pupils in regular physical activity

Total spend: £129,481.83 (ranked 1/5, 35 per cent of the total indicator spend)
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Area of spend	per cent occurrence	total spend	per cent of overall sample spend
Use of coaches for physical activities	48	£ 76,966.84	21
Strategies for development of physical activity	32	£ 9,210.00	2
Training pupils to be play leaders/ leadership	28	£ 6,370.75	2
Specialist teacher/sports apprentice to provide opportunities (extra-curricular)	16	£ 23,474.00	6
Development of the playground/ physical education space	16	£ 5,849.19	2
Resources/ equipment to promote physical activity	12	£ 2,159.05	1
Strategies for attendance to extra-curricular (non-competitive)	8	£ 4,592.00	1
Strategies to develop family physical activity	4	£ 860.00	≤1

The most popular occurrence against key indicator one, was the 'use of coaches for activities promoting physical activity', with £76,966.84 allocated to this area. Two approaches that were often cited, but cost relatively little, were 'strategies for development of physical activity', including activities that took place outside of lessons. In comparison, using a 'specialist teacher/sports apprentice to provide opportunities' was only cited four times, but had the second largest spend for this indicator at £23,474.00. In schools that were wishing to improve upon physical activity, spending on specialists was costly, whereas subsidised schemes, such as Change4Life incurred little cost for the school.

Key indicator two: the profile of PE and sport being raised across the school as a tool for whole school improvement

Total spend: £34,368.92 (ranked 5/5, 9 per cent of total indicator spend)			
Area of spend	per cent occurrence	total spend	per cent of overall sample spend
New equipment for whole school improvement	16	£ 15,471.58	4
Trips/ enrichment activity	16	£ 5,257.00	1
Extra s	12	£ 10,096.22	3
Sport personalities/ visitors	8	£ 2,170.00	1
Promotion and advertising	8	£ 374.12	≤1
Cooking sessions	4	£ 1,000.00	≤1

Key indicator two presented the least amount of expenditure across the overall sample. Paying for trips, activities and equipment was the most frequent occurrence within this indicator. The use of money to fund additional swimming was cited at only 3 per cent of the overall spend across the

sample, despite 36 per cent of children currently not meeting all National Curriculum measures¹ (Swim England, 2017).

Key indicator three: increased confidence, knowledge and skills of all staff in teaching PE and sport

Total spend: £77,150.35 (ranked indicator 3/5, 21 per cent of total indicator spend)			
Area of spend	per cent occurrence	total spend	per cent of overall sample spend
Other staff CPD (course attendance)	48	£ 20,277.00	5
Coaching/ specialist teacher (class teacher working alongside)	28	£ 31,013.50	8
Physical education consultancy	16	£ 13,217.00	4
Sport governing body qualification	16	£ 6,850.85	2
Completion of the afPE Level 5/6 award	4	£ 1,150.00	≤1
School physical education coordinator leading training	8	£ 3,042.00	1
Membership of online resources	8	£ 950.00	≤1
Staff clothing	4	£ 650.00	≤1

The role of key indicator three is to address the confidence and competence of the teaching workforce, so that lessons are deemed to be at least of a ‘good’ standard (Ofsted, 2013). This was the third most funded indicator and formed 21 per cent of the overall spend. Almost 50 per cent of money within this indicator was spent on ‘other staff CPD’, which involved attending courses, a seemingly costly activity for schools. The second most frequent occurrence was the use of a coach or specialist to carry out the delivery of lessons and for the teachers to develop their knowledge by working alongside them. Although it was the second most frequent occurrence, this was the largest expenditure within the key indicator and formed 8 per cent of the overall spend within the sample.

Key indicator four: broader experience of a range of sports and activities offered to all pupils

Total spend: £71,962.32 (ranked indicator 3/5, 19 per cent of total indicator spend)			
Area of spend	per cent occurrence	total spend	per cent of overall sample spend
New equipment	56	£ 31,482.07	8
Bring in a specialist coach (one-off)	36	£ 21,243.75	6
Coaches to deliver activities (regularly)	16	£ 14,324.00	4
Hire of facilities	4	£ 750.00	≤1
Early Years resources	4	£ 482.50	≤1

Purchasing new equipment was the most frequent occurrence in key indicator four, with over 50 per cent of schools spending their funding in this way. The next two most frequent occurrences and

¹ Editor’s note: schools are not allowed to use the funding to deliver the minimum requirements of the National Curriculum – including those specified for swimming.

expenditure related to bringing in coaches, either regularly or one a one-off basis. The impact of one-off coaching experiences on teaching and learning for young people is not known from this study; further exploration is needed to consider the sustainability of such high expenditure.

Key indicator five: increased participation in competitive sport

Total spend: £60,976.71 (ranked indicator 4/5, 16 per cent of total indicator spend)			
Area of spend	per cent occurrence	total spend	per cent of overall sample spend
Membership of an organisation	68	£ 32,456.00	9
Transport to competitions	32	£ 5,380.65	1
Entry into competitions	40	£ 6,917.50	2
Introduce new/ develop competitive sports	20	£ 4,403.00	1
Staff cover to attend competitions	20	£ 1,334.00	≤1
Sport-specific coaches for competitive sport	12	£ 6,161.75	2
Pupil sports kit/ clothing	16	£ 2,649.31	1
Medals/ awards/ stickers	12	£ 231.50	≤1
Equipment for competitive sport	4	£ 1,443.00	≤1

Key indicator five had the greatest number of occurrences across the sample, with 68 per cent of schools opting to have ‘membership to a society/group’ at a cost of £32,456.00. Whilst some other activities were also popular, their relative spend was very low.

A ‘typical’ school in Birmingham

The total expenditure of the Primary PE and Sport Premium, across the sample, indicates that the highest proportion of spending in these Birmingham schools related to key indicator one during 2017/18, amounting to 35 per cent of the total expenditure (£129,481). Key indicator two had the least frequent occurrences, with an overall expenditure of £34,368 (9 per cent). Key indicators three and four had a similar level of expenditure to each other, with only £5,188.03 variation between them (£77,150.35 and £71,962.32 respectively) and key indicator five slightly lower still, with a £60,976 spend. Based on the data in this study, Figure 2 illustrates what an ‘average’ primary school in Birmingham in 2017/18 might look like as a profile of the Premium spend.

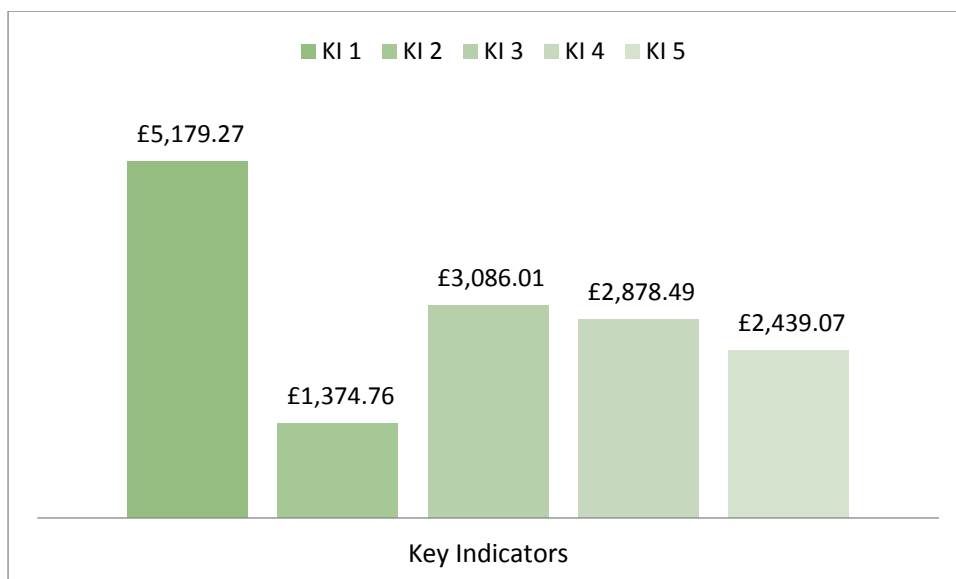


Figure 2: The average spend of the Primary PE and Sport Premium for a Birmingham school across each key indicator

Conclusion

This article has presented findings from a case study of 25 schools in Birmingham to offer an insight into how the Primary PE and Sport Premium funding has been spent. Findings have shown how the funding has been apportioned against the five key indicators of the Premium. Inconsistencies were apparent across schools in the way in which reporting was undertaken, creating a complex overview at local level. The consistent use of the afPE and YST reporting tool (2017) may go some way in ameliorating this issue and provide schools with greater clarity about what should be accounted for and why.

The findings also highlight that most funding was spent on key indicator one: ‘the engagement of all pupils in regular physical activity’. This indicates a shift from initial concerns around teacher confidence when the Premium was first launched (Ofsted, 2013) to the now mounting concerns over child health and inactivity (DoH, 2016). The least amount of money was spent on PE as a tool for whole-school improvement. However, it is unclear from this study if this finding was due to schools not valuing the role of PE and sport or whether they did not consider this to be a priority. What is perhaps of most interest to us as teacher educators, and the motivation behind undertaking this research, is the changing landscape of the workforce represented in primary schools as a result of the Premium. With a large number of sports coaches visible in the delivery and development/ training of primary teachers in PE, we are interested to know how this might affect the place of PE in primary schools in years to come and the future of its workforce. Further research into the Primary PE and Sport Premium is needed to supplement small and contextualised studies such as this and would create a greater evidence base on which to direct future Primary PE and Sport Premium spend.

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